

**Thomas Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, March 29, 1807,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
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Ford.**

TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR J. MSS. (HENRY DEARBORN.)

March 29, 1807.

Many officers of the army being involved in the offence of intending a military enterprise against a nation at peace with the United States, to remove the whole without trial, by the paramount authority of the executive, would be a proceeding of unusual severity. Some line must therefore be drawn to separate the more from the less guilty. The only sound one which occurs to me is between those who believe the enterprise was with the approbation of the government, open or secret, & those who meant to proceed in defiance of the government. Concealment would be no line at all, because all concealed it. Applying the line of *defiance* to the case of L Mead, it does not appear by any testimony I have seen, that he meant to proceed in defiance of the government, but, on the contrary, that he was made to believe the government approved of the expedition. If it be objected that he concealed a part of what had taken place in his communications to the Secretary at War, yet if a concealment of the whole would not furnish a proper line of distinction, still less would the concealment of a part. This too would be a removal for *prevarication* not for *unauthorized enterprise*, & could not be a proper ground for exercising the extraordinary power of removal by the President. On the whole, I think Lieutn Meade's is not a case for its exercise. Affectionate salutations.